

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows. Please amend claim 1, 6 – 7, 9 – 10, and 18. Please cancel claim 5 and 16 – 17. Additions are delineated by underlined words and deletions are delineated by strikethrough words or bracketed (e.g., [[17]]).

1. (Presently amended) A vacuum packaging appliance for evacuating a container, said vacuum packaging appliance comprising:

a base defining an upper support surface adapted to receive an open end of said container;

a lid operatively associated with said base, said lid and said base defining a vacuum chamber there between to receive said open end of said container;

at least one gasket surrounding said vacuum chamber for directly engaging said container such that said open end of said container is operatively associated with said vacuum chamber;

a vacuum source operatively associated with said vacuum chamber for selectively evacuating said vacuum chamber and said operatively associated container; and

a vacuum latch for restraining movement of said base relative to said lid when said vacuum packaging appliance is in use and

wherein said vacuum latch includes a latch gasket formed into said vacuum latch chamber such that said latch gasket forms a seal between said lid and said base when said lid and said base are engaged.

2. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 1, wherein said vacuum latch includes a vacuum latch chamber.

3. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 2, wherein said vacuum latch chamber is formed in said lid.

4. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 2, wherein said vacuum latch chamber is formed in said base.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Presently amended) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim [5] 1, wherein said latch gasket is removable from said vacuum latch chamber.

7. (Presently amended) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim [5] 1, wherein said vacuum latch is coupled with said vacuum source such that when said vacuum source is activated, said vacuum latch chamber is operatively associated with said vacuum source.

8. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 7, wherein said vacuum latch chamber is formed into said vacuum packaging appliance via a

spring attachment thereby facilitating mating of said vacuum latch chamber in forming a seal.

9. (Presently amended) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim [5] 1, wherein said vacuum latch is coupled to a second vacuum source.

10. (Presently amended) A vacuum packaging appliance for use in evacuating a container, said vacuum packaging appliance comprising:

/ a vacuum source;
a base defining an upper support surface and including a trough, said upper support surface and said trough adapted to receive an open end of said container, said trough useful for capturing liquids and contaminants removed from said container during operation of said vacuum packaging appliance;

a lid operatively associated with said base, said lid and trough defining a vacuum chamber there between to receive said open end of said container, said vacuum chamber operatively coupled with said vacuum source; and

a vacuum latch including a vacuum latch chamber formed in said lid, distinct from said vacuum chamber, which through a vacuum latching mechanism tends to maintain a coupling of said base and said lid, as well as a vacuum integrity of said vacuum chamber, during operation of said vacuum packaging appliance.

11. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 10, wherein said vacuum packaging appliance further comprises a heat sealing mechanism arranged to heat seal said open end of said container.

12. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 10, wherein said trough is removable from said vacuum packaging appliance, thereby tending to ease emptying and cleaning of said trough.

13. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 12, wherein said trough coupled to said base via a tongue and groove such that a user may remove said trough by pulling said trough in a sliding motion out from said base.

14. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 13, wherein said trough has a handle for ease of pulling said trough from said base.

15. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 14, wherein said handle of said trough can be hidden behind a door in said base, said trough only removable when said door is open.

16. – 17. (Cancelled)

18. (Presently amended) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim [17] 10, wherein said vacuum latch includes a latch gasket formed into said vacuum

latch chamber such that said latch gasket forms a seal between said lid and said base when said lid and said base are engaged.

19. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 14, wherein said vacuum latch is coupled with said vacuum source such that when said vacuum source is activated, said vacuum latch chamber is operatively associated with said vacuum source.

20. (Original) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 14, wherein said vacuum latch chamber is formed into said vacuum packaging appliance via a spring attachment thereby facilitating mating of said vacuum latch chamber in forming a seal.

21-37 (Cancelled)

38. (Withdrawn) A vacuum packaging appliance for use in evacuating a container, said vacuum packaging appliance comprising:

- a first vacuum source;
- a base defining an upper support surface;
- a lid operatively associated with said base, said lid and said upper support surface defining a vacuum chamber there between to receive an open end of said container, said vacuum chamber operatively coupled with said first vacuum source in

such a manner that when said first vacuum source is operative said container tends to be evacuated of gases;

 a second vacuum source; and

 a pair of side channel vacuum latches, distinct from said vacuum chamber, which through a vacuum latching mechanism tend to maintain a coupling of said base and said lid when said second vacuum source is operative.

39. (Withdrawn) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 38, wherein said first vacuum source and said second vacuum source may be activated independently.

40. (Withdrawn) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 39, wherein said first vacuum source and said second vacuum source are coupled to a single vacuum circuit driven by a single vacuum pump.

41. (Withdrawn) A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 39, wherein said side channel vacuum latches each include a chamber spring mounted onto the appliance for ease in operation.